

Dear Colleague,

This afternoon (March 23, 2020), Governor Wolf will issue a stay-at-home order for seven counties in Pennsylvania (Allegheny, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Monroe, Montgomery, and Philadelphia).

Under Governor Wolf's order, personnel at our educational entities in all 67 counties who are providing life-sustaining services, including, but not limited to: administration, food preparation and distribution, housing, security, information technology, building maintenance, and operations (e.g., payroll) can continue to be deemed essential and **are permitted to continue their work**, provided they adhere to social distancing guidelines.

In addition, the Department of Education (PDE) announced today all schools in the commonwealth will remain closed through at least April 6 as a result of the COVID-19 response efforts. The closure order could be extended beyond April 6 if necessary to save lives and stop the spread of COVID-19.

Under the new timeline, school buildings would reopen on April 7 for two days to allow school administrators, teachers and other staff time to prepare classrooms, set up cafeterias, schedule transportation and arrange other business operations. Students would return to school on April 9, unless extending the closure is needed in response to the situation with the virus at that time.

To assist schools during the extended closure, the state's 29 intermediate units are ready to provide technical assistance to help develop continuity of education plans for all students beginning tomorrow, Tuesday, March 24.

Additionally, we are cancelling standardized testing for students in career and technical education (CTE) programs for the 2019-20 school year. These include exams from the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) and National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS).

I appreciate your patience and flexibility as we navigate this unprecedented time together and thank you for your dedication to serving and supporting your school communities.

-Pedro

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